

Information Packet

Princeton Westford Apartment Homes

An Affordable Housing Lottery
Westford MA

This packet contains specific information on the affordable housing program and application process for the affordable rental units being offered at Princeton Westford Apartment Homes in Westford, MA.

The Town of Westford and Princeton Westford Apartment Homes invite you to read this information and submit an application if you think that you meet all eligibility requirements.

Please hold on to this packet until you have leased a unit as it will be a useful guide throughout the entire process.

The first units are scheduled for occupancy in Spring/Summer 2014.

APPLICATIONS DUE BY 2:00 PM, April 17th, 2014

Additional Applications available at the Westford Library and www.s-e-b.com/lottery.

Princeton Westford Apartment Homes

For Affordable Unit Information call (617) 782-6900x3

For TTY Dial 711

Free Translation Available

Information Packet created by:

SEB, 165 Chestnut Hill Ave #2, Brighton, MA 02135



Table of Contents

General Overview and Rents.....	pg. 3
Eligibility Requirements.....	pg. 4
Income (Maximum and Minimum).....	pg. 4
Assets.....	pg. 6
Students.....	pg. 7
Household Size and Composition.....	pg. 8
Step-By-Step Process and Timeline.....	pg. 10
Step 1: Applying for the Affordable Housing Program.....	pg. 11
Step 2: The Lottery.....	pg. 12
Step 3: Waiting Lists.....	pg. 13
Step 4: Notification of Lottery Results.....	pg. 14
Step 5: Leasing Office Review and Unit Selection.....	pg. 15
Step 6: MHP Certification.....	pg. 15
Step 7: Yearly Eligibility and Rent Review.....	pg. 16
Local Preference Information.....	pg. 17
Disabled-Accessible Unit Information.....	pg. 18

There will also be an Informational Workshop on March 18th at 6:00 pm in the 2nd floor meeting room of Westford Town Hall (55 Main Street) where questions about the lottery and the development can be addressed directly.

GENERAL OVERVIEW AND RENTS

Princeton Westford Apartment Homes is a 200-unit community nestled into a forested preserve off of Littleton Road in Westford, MA. The community will include five four-story garden-style apartment buildings. A state of the art clubhouse outfitted with a fitness center, meeting space, swimming pool and Wi-Fi Café will also be part of the apartment community. 40 of the units will be rented to households with annual incomes not exceeding 50% of Area Median Income (AMI) adjusted for family size as determined by HUD.

For more details on the development and the units, please visit: www.PrincetonWestford.com

# of Units	# of Bedrooms	# of Bathrooms	Disabled-Accessible Features?	Approximate Size	Rent* (does not include any utilities except Sewer)
8	1	1	No	781 sq ft	\$726
2	1	1	Yes	781 sq ft	\$726
22	2	2	No	1,163 sq ft	\$851
8	2	2	Yes	1,163 sq ft	\$851

*** RENTS DO NOT CHANGE BASED ON INCOME. This is not subsidized housing. Tenants are responsible for paying the full amount of rent each month and all utilities except sewer**

Since it is possible that there will be more interested and eligible applicants than available units, the Town and the Developer will be sponsoring an application process and lottery to rank the eligible applicants for the program. The application and lottery process as well as the eligibility requirements are described in this information packet. Princeton Westford Apartment Homes does not discriminate in the selection of applicants on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, ancestry, children, familial status, genetic information, marital status, public assistance reciprocity, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran/military status, or any other basis prohibited by law. Persons with disabilities are entitled to request a reasonable accommodation in rules, policies, practices, or services, or to request a reasonable modification in the housing, when such accommodations or modifications may be necessary to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the housing.

Q: How long will the designated apartments remain affordable?

A: As a **current resident only**, you are considered income eligible for an affordable unit as long as your household earns an income that does not exceed 140% of the current applicable income limit for a household of your size (see *Yearly Eligibility and Rent Review*). Additionally, the rents may change yearly based on changes in Area Median Income and Local Utility Allowances. If the Area Median Income decreases or the total utility allowance increases, rents may drop. If the AMI increases or the utility allowances decrease, the rent may increase a few percentage points as allowed in the Regulatory Agreement.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Q: Who is eligible to apply for the affordable units in Princeton Westford Apartment Homes?

A: Households must meet all of the following criteria:

- 1.) Households must have income and assets that qualify within the parameters as highlighted in this section.
- 2.) Household priority will be given based on household composition. For questions on household size and composition, please read **“Household Size and Composition”**.
- 3.) All occupants in the unit cannot be full-time students, some exceptions apply (see page 7).

Additionally, some of the units will be disabled-accessible. All households may apply for the disabled-accessible units but households in need of an accessible unit will get top priority, regardless if the unit is designated as local preference or not. For questions on priority by need of a disabled accessible unit, please read **“Disabled-Accessible Unit Information”**.

Q: What are the income eligibility requirements?

A: To be eligible to lease an affordable unit, annual household income must be within a particular range, set by maximum and minimum income levels as follows:

Maximum Income

Household Size	Allowable Income Limit 50% AMI
1	\$31,750
2	\$36,300
3	\$40,850
4	\$45,350

To be eligible to apply to lease an affordable unit, the combined annual income for all income sources of all income-earning members in the household must be at or below fifty percent of median income for the Lowell HMFA. **All sources of income are counted, please see details below.**

Minimum Income

The Leasing Office will determine if an applicant has enough monthly income to cover the rent using the same methodology for applicants applying to their market rate units. The required rent to income ratio is 40%. The approximate minimum incomes are shown in the table below. Applicants may make less than the minimum incomes shown below if they have sufficient savings from which they can draw down otherwise, applicants will not be found to be eligible for a lease if they make less than the incomes shown below. Applicants who have received a housing subsidy (like Section 8) are not subject to the minimum income requirements but, like all other applicants, will also have to pass reviews on credit scores, tenant history etc.

Unit Size	Approximate Minimum Income Limit for households without a housing subsidy
1 BR	\$21,780
2 BR	\$25,530

Q: How is a household's income determined?

A: A household's income is the total anticipated amount of money received by ALL members of the household over the next 12 months (starting from the date of application and projecting forward 12 months) based on their current income and assets. In an effort to provide as accurate an income estimation as possible, the Lottery Agent will also review historical income data to provide a basis for future income estimates. Any monies you anticipate receiving in the next 12 months will be counted as income and monies received over the previous 6 months will be analyzed to help estimate future income. This includes, but is not limited to, Social Security, alimony, child support, overtime pay, bonuses, unemployment, severance pay, part-time employment, matured bonds, monies to be received in court settlements, and actual or imputed interest and dividends on bank accounts and other assets. ALL SOURCES OF INCOME ARE COUNTED with the exception of income from employment for household members under the age of 18 and any income over \$480/year for full time students who are dependents (but note that all such income must still be documented even if it is exempt from the household income calculation).

It will be assumed that all applicants will continue to receive any monies they have received over the past 12 months unless supporting documentation proves otherwise. It is also not up to the household to determine what monies received over the past year should and should not be counted as their calculated income. Therefore, all monies should be listed on the application and the inclusion of these monies in determining a household's eligibility will be based on affordable housing guidelines.

Allowable Assets

There is no asset limit for applying households for this development. However, the higher of the actual income earned from assets, or the imputed income of 1% of all assets, will be counted as income. Household Assets are calculated at the time of application. Assets may include cash, cash in savings and checking accounts, net cash value of stocks, **net cash value of retirement accounts** (such as 401k), real property, bonds, and capital investments.

If any household member currently owns property, the total amount of equity in the home shall be added to their total value of assets.

Example: A household has \$10,000 in savings, , \$20,000 in a retirement account that they are not drawing down from (\$13,000 net cash value) and a home assessed at \$300,000 on which they currently have \$280,000 remaining on the mortgage (\$20,000 in equity).

<i>Their assets total is:</i>	$\$10,000 + \$13,000 + \$20,000 = \$43,000$
<i>Actual Income from assets is:</i>	$\$300 + \$0 + \$0 = \300 (A)
<i>Imputed Income at 1% is:</i>	$1\% \text{ of } \$43,000 = \430 (B)

For this household, \$430 would be added to their income they receive from all other income sources (employment, Social Security, Alimony etc). as the program takes the greater of (A) actual income from assets OR (B) imputed income from assets.

Q: I cannot withdraw money from my 401k or retirement fund, do I have to include it when I list my assets?

A: Yes. You need to include the **net cash value** of all your current retirement funds. We realize that most retirement funds assess large penalties for early withdrawal but this does not technically mean that you “cannot” withdraw your funds. The post-penalty amount is what you need to provide along with supporting documentation.

Q: If I cannot qualify for a Lease based on my own income or credit history, can I have a co-signer on my Lease?

A: No. Only people who will live in the unit can sign the lease. Applying households must be able to meet the income qualifications on their own. If someone outside the household is going to help pay the rent, the amount to be paid must be listed as “Periodic Payments” on the Income Table in the Program Application. These payments will be counted towards the applying household’s income. Guarantors will NOT be allowed.

Q: Do I have to be a resident of the Town of Westford to apply?

A: No. All households that meet the income guidelines specified above may apply for an affordable unit. Applicants that meet the Local Preference requirements will be given the opportunity to lease some, but not all, of the affordable units first. For more information, please see the section on Local Preference.

Students

A household comprised entirely of full-time students is NOT allowed to lease an affordable unit unless it meets one of five exceptions:

1. A married couple who are full time students who file a join tax return
2. Single parents and their children and such parents are not dependents of another individual and such children are not dependents of anyone other than the parent in the household
3. A single person household who is a full-time student who is enrolled in a job training program receiving assistance under the Job Training Partnership Act or under other similar Federal, State or local laws.
4. A single person household who is a full-time student who receives assistance under Title IV of the Social Security Act.
5. A single person household who is a full-time student who was previously under the care and placement responsibility of the State agency responsible for administering a plan under part B or part E of title IV of the Social Security Act.

Q: What is the definition of a “full-time student”?

A: A “student” is an individual who is or will be a full-time student at an educational organization for 5 of the months in the 12-month lease-term. The 5 months need not be consecutive. The determination of student status as full or part-time should be based on the criteria used by the educational institution the student is attending. The term “educational organization” includes elementary schools, junior and senior high schools, colleges, universities, and technical, trade and mechanical schools. It does not include on-the-job training courses.

Q: If I am a single parent who is a full-time student, can I qualify for an affordable unit?

A: If you are not listed as a dependent on anyone else’s taxes AND your child is listed as a dependent on your taxes, then you would qualify for an affordable unit.

If your child is listed as a dependent on someone else’s taxes, you would not qualify for an affordable unit.

If you are listed as a dependent on someone else’s taxes, you would not qualify for an affordable unit.

Q: If we are a recently married couple who are full-time students who have not yet filed our taxes, can we qualify for an affordable unit?

A: Yes, but you would need to provide your marriage certificate to verify your marital status.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

Q: How is appropriate household size determined?

A: According to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development guidelines:

Within an applicant pool first (priority) shall be given to households requiring the total number of bedrooms in the unit based on the following **criteria**:

- a. There is at least one occupant and no more than two occupants per bedroom.
- b. A husband and wife, or those in a similar living arrangement, shall be required to share a bedroom. Other household members may share but shall not be required to share a bedroom.
- c. A person described in the first sentence of (b) shall not be required to share a bedroom if a consequence of sharing would be a severe adverse impact on his or her mental or physical health and the lottery agent receives reliable medical documentation as to such impact of sharing.

Household size shall not exceed state sanitary code requirements for occupancy of a unit.

For the purposes of this lottery, the following household sizes and compositions will be considered “appropriate” for the following unit sizes:

TYPE A

Priority for a 2-Bedroom Unit

- All 4 person households
- All 3 person households
- 2 person household: 2 heads-of-household under criteria c (described above)
- 2 person household: 1 head-of-household plus one member

TYPE B

Priority only for a 1-Bedroom Unit (but may still apply for a 2-Bedroom Unit)

- 2 person household: 2 heads-of-household
- 1 person household: all types

In Step 3: The Lottery, you will find a detailed explanation on how priority is given to certain household sizes and compositions.

Q: Does the unborn child of a currently pregnant household member count towards our household size?

A: Yes. A household may count an unborn child as a household member. You will have to submit proof of pregnancy with all the income and asset documentation that needs to be submitted with your application.

Q: Can a household in Group B apply for a two-bedroom unit?

A: Yes. However, *every applying household that is Type A will be given the opportunity to lease an affordable two-bedroom unit first.* A household that is Type B will *only* be given the opportunity to lease an affordable two-bedroom unit if there are not enough eligible households that are Type A.

Q: If I am currently going through a divorce/separation or planning on being divorced / separated soon, can I still apply?

A: You will need to provide proof that the separation or divorce process has begun or has already been finalized. The **Program Application** will guide you through the documentation you will need to provide.

If you have only begun considering a divorce or separation, and no legal action has been taken, you cannot apply as a single head-of-household and your application will be reviewed as if your current spouse will be moving into the affordable unit with you.

Q: Can a five or six person household apply for the two-bedroom apartment?

A: Usually occupancy is based on two people per bedroom unless the family requests a specific size unit. Household size must then comply with unit size based on the current State Sanitary Code Minimum Square Footage Requirements. Maximum number of occupants may be increased based on State Sanitary Code. Acceptance of a unit at maximum occupancy does not give the resident the right to claim overcrowded conditions and request a transfer to a larger unit.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Q: What is the application, selection, and move-in process for the affordable units in Princeton Westford Apartment Homes?

A: The following steps outline the entire process of applying for and leasing an affordable apartment. The following pages explain each step in greater detail.

Step 1: Applying for the Affordable Program	thru April 17 th , 2014
Step 2: The Lottery	April 30 th , 2014
Step 3: Waiting Lists	within 1 week of lottery
Step 4: Notification of Lottery Results	within 1 week of lottery
Step 5: Leasing Office Review and Unit Selection	starts 1 week after lottery
Step 6: Yearly Eligibility and Rent Review	60-90 days prior to lease renewal

There will also be an Informational Workshop on March 18th at 6:00 pm in the 2nd floor meeting room of Westford Town Hall (55 Main Street) where questions about the lottery and the development can be addressed directly.

Step 1: Applying for the Affordable Program

Once a household reads this Information Packet in its entirety, they will need to fill out a Program Application. The applying household must include all income, asset, tax and all other documentation as directed by the Program Application for every person that will be residing in the apartment. The Program Application must be signed and dated.

The Program Application and Required Documentation must be received (not postmarked) by the Lottery Agent by 2 pm on April 17th, 2014. All applications should be sent to:

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING LOTTERY

Re: Princeton Westford
165 Chestnut Hill Ave #2
Brighton, MA 02135
Seb.housing@gmail.com
Fax: 617.782.4500

To ensure applications arrive in time, we recommend sending them in at least a week prior to the application deadline. **Late applications will not be accepted- NO EXCEPTIONS!** If you want to ensure your application is received, we recommend sending it by certified mail. The Lottery Agent, Management Agent, Owner and other affiliated entities are not responsible for lost or late applications.

Once a completed Program Application is received with ALL Required Documentation, SEB will determine initial eligibility and compliance.

If the applicant is determined to be eligible for the Lottery, they will receive an **Application Number** in the order in which their completed application was received. The purpose of the Application Number is simply to keep all households names unknown when the Application Numbers are drawn at the lottery.

Households that are deemed ineligible by the Lottery Agent will be notified by mail (or by email if an email address is provided).

Entrance into the Lottery does not guarantee that a household is eligible for an affordable apartment. Please read all of the following steps for further details on the review process.

Q: What happens if I don't submit all necessary documentation or fail to correctly complete my Affordable Housing Program Application?

A: Households that submit incomplete documentation will be mailed a notice detailing the additional documentation that is needed to make their application complete. Their application will remain in an "Incomplete Application Pool" until all requested materials have been received. Households with applications in the Incomplete Application Pool will not be entered into the Lottery.

Step 2: The Lottery

The Lottery will be held on April 30th, 2014 at 6:00 pm in the Westford Town Hall. Households do not need to be present for the Lottery drawings. All Households will be notified of the results by the Lottery Agent (*see step 5*).

There will be two lotteries, a Local Preference Lottery and an Open Lottery. For Local Preference households, Application Numbers are placed in both Lotteries. For all other households, Application Numbers are placed only in the Open Lottery.

For each Lottery, a representative from the Town will pull Application Numbers from a box. The Application Numbers are randomly drawn for both of the lotteries and placed in the order drawn on a two Lottery Result Lists.

The order drawn does not necessarily reflect the order that households will get to select units as Application Numbers of smaller households are mixed in with Application Numbers of appropriately sized households. Regardless of the order drawn within a lottery pool, all households of appropriate size for each unit size will be given the opportunity to lease a unit before any smaller household.

For example: A one-person household is the first household drawn in the Lottery. They will be given the first opportunity to lease a one-bedroom unit. However, if they wish to lease a two-bedroom unit, they will have to wait until all appropriately sized households drawn after them in the Lottery are given the opportunity to lease a two-bedroom unit.

To help clarify the actual order that applicants will be given the opportunity to lease units, Waiting Lists will be created from the Lottery Results List (*see next step*).

Step 3: The Waiting Lists

The Waiting Lists will be compiled immediately after the lottery. Both the Lottery Results Lists and the Waiting Lists will be sent to each applicant after the Lottery. There will be separate Waiting Lists created from the two Lottery Results List to illustrate the order households will choose units based unit size, household size, and need for a disabled-accessible unit. **The position each household has on the Waiting Lists is determined by the order in which their Application Number is drawn in the Lottery relative to households of similar qualifications.** The households of “appropriate size” for each unit type will be taken from the Lottery Results Lists in the order originally drawn and will occupy the top tier of the Waiting Lists. Smaller households will be added to the bottom tier of the Waiting Lists in the order originally drawn. *Please see “Household Size and Compositions” for details on Household Types A and B shown below.*

Waiting List #1: Five 1BR Units for Local Preference Applicants

Local Preference Households (with no priority among household types)

Waiting List #2: Thirteen 2BR Units for Local Preference Applicants

Top Tier: Type A Local Preference Households

Bottom Tier: Type B Local Preference Households

Waiting List #3: Three 1BR Units for All Applicants

All Households (with no priority among household types)

Waiting List #4: Nine 2BR Units for All Applicants

Top Tier: All Type A Households

Bottom Tier: All Type B Households

Waiting List #5: Two 1BR DA-Unit for DA Applicants

Top Tier: Local Preference households eligible for a Disabled-Accessible (DA) unit

Bottom Tier: Non-Local Preference households eligible for a Disabled-Accessible (DA) unit

Waiting List #6: Eight 2BR DA-Unit for DA Applicants

Top Tier: Type A Local Preference households eligible for a Disabled-Accessible (DA) unit

Second Tier: Type B Local Pref. households eligible for a Disabled-Accessible (DA) unit

Third Tier: Type A Non-Local Preference households eligible for a DA unit

Bottom Tier: Type B Non-Local Pref. households eligible for a DA unit

Example: A non-Local Preference two-person household in Type B marks on their application that they are interested in a two-bedroom unit. Their Application Number will only be entered into the Open Lottery. They are the first number drawn. They will have the top position in the bottom tier on Waiting List #4, but this position will be behind every Type A household who wanted a 2BR unit.

Step 4: Notification of Lottery Results

The Lottery Results establish the Waiting Lists. Every household with an Application Number will have a position on at least one Waiting List. Households that qualify for every lottery will have a position on every Waiting List.

Households with a position on the Waiting List that is less than or equal to the number of units available through that Waiting List (called the “Top Households”) will be given a specific date before they must make an appointment. The earliest appointments (for the households with the #1 position on each Waiting List) will be a date 7 days after the Lottery. The appointment date for the households behind them will be a date 8 days after the lottery. The households behind them will have a date 9 days following the lottery, and so on, until all the Top Households have appointment dates.

Failure to complete a Lease Application within the given date will result in the removal of their Application Number from the Waiting List.

Households with positions lower on the Waiting Lists will have to wait for the removal of households with a higher position than them before being given an opportunity to lease a apartment. Households with lower positions will be given at least a 4 day notice of their upcoming appointment dates if there is going to be an apartment available for them. Households are removed from the Waiting Lists if the Leasing Office deems that they are not eligible for a lease based on their Lease Application, if a household fails to meet future deadlines for documentation submittal and lease signing, or if a household notifies the Leasing Office that they are no longer interested in leasing an apartment.

Households in the Incomplete Application Pool will not have an Application Number and therefore will not have a position on any Waiting List. They will be added to the bottom of the appropriate Waiting Lists when they eventually submit all required documentation.

Step 5: Leasing Office Review and Unit Selection

The Lease Application review will be the same review that households for market-rate apartments undergo, where factors such as Employment history, Credit score/reports, Former lease history, Criminal Background Screening and sufficient income are considered.

The unit a household applies for must be an apartment size that corresponds to the Waiting List from which they were chosen (i.e. a household with an appointment for a 1BR apartment because of a top position on that Waiting List cannot put down a deposit for a 2BR apartment).

Households will put down a security deposit when they complete their lease application with the leasing office. The security deposit will be \$500 for fully approved applicants but it may be up to one month's rent for applicants who are approved with conditions, please call the leasing office for more details. If a household is found ineligible for a lease, this deposit will be refunded.

If a household does not put down this security deposit during the time allocated to them, they will be removed from the Waiting List and will no longer be able to immediately lease an apartment.

Q: If I cannot qualify for a Lease based on my own income or credit history, can I have a co-signer on my Lease?

A: No. Only people who will live in the unit can sign the lease. Applying households must be able to meet the income qualifications on their own. If someone outside the household is going to help pay the rent, the amount to be paid must be listed as "Periodic Payments" on the Income Table in the Program Application. These payments will be counted towards the applying household's income. Guarantors will NOT be allowed.

Step 6: MHP Certification

When a household has been approved for a lease and provided all necessary deposits, SEB will send their to file to MHP (Massachusetts Housing Partnership, the subsidizing agency) for program certification. It is ultimately MHP who will determine if a household is eligible and can move forward to the next step of the process.

SEB goes through great lengths to ensure that files are complete when sent to MHP but if MHP needs any additional documentation to complete their eligibility review, they will notify SEB and SEB will notify the applicant. The applicant must submit any documentation requested by MHP within 5 business days. Applicants who do not provide additional documentation and applicants that MHP disqualifies will be removed from the Waiting List and lose their opportunity to move forward in this process. Once MHP has certified a household as eligible, they will contact SEB and SEB will direct the household to the next step.

Upon move-in, the resident pays their first month's rent.

Step 7: Yearly Eligibility and Rent Review

Approximately 90 days before lease renewal, you will need to submit updated income and asset documentation to the Leasing Office so they can ensure that you are still under the maximum income guidelines. You will not be able to renew your Lease until you have submitted all required documentation. You should maintain records of your taxes, pay-stubs, bank statements and asset statements while living in the affordable unit. Maintaining records makes this yearly review very simple.

Q: How long can I lease my affordable unit?

A: As a **current resident only**, you are considered income eligible for an affordable unit as long as your household earns an income that does not exceed **140% of the current year's income limit** for a household of your size.

Using the Current Income Limits as an example:

Household Size	Current Income Limit for New Applicants	Income Limit for Current Tenants (140% of Current Income Limit)
1	\$31,750	\$44,450
2	\$36,300	\$50,820
3	\$40,850	\$57,190
4	\$45,350	\$63,490

According to the table above for the years shown, if a household's income exceeds the Income Limit for Current Tenants at the time of their renewal, their unit shall still remain affordable until the next available market rate unit with the same or greater number of bedrooms is rented at an affordable price. Once this market rate apartment becomes newly deemed as affordable, the apartment that was previously deemed affordable can subsequently be rented at market rates. The household with earnings exceeding the Income Limit for Current Tenants can choose to stay in their apartment, yet would then have to pay the market rate rent.

Q: Will my rent increase each year, and if so, by how much?

A: Rents may increase a few percentage points if the Lowell HMFA Area Median Income increases or the costs of utilities decreases. Likewise, if the Lowell HMFA Area Median Income decreases and the costs of utilities increases, **rents may decrease**.

LOCAL PREFERENCE INFORMATION

Q: What is Local Preference?

A: The Town of Westford has established a local preference for 70% of the affordable apartments. Local Preference will be given as described in Step 4 in the Step-By-Step Process. An applicant qualifies for local preference if the applicant or a member of their household fit into one of the following categories:

- An individual or family maintaining a primary residence within the Town of Westford
- An individual who is employed by Town of Westford
- An individual who works for a business located in Westford
- A parent or guardian with children attending the Westford Public Schools

Q: Do households which meet all Local Preference criteria get priority over households which meet only one?

A: NO. As long as a household meets any one of the Local Preference criteria, they will qualify for Local Preference.

Q: What if a household does not qualify for Local Preference?

A: Households without Local Preference will be entered into the Open Lottery and they will be given positions on the Waiting Lists for all applicants.

Q: Does Local Preference households who do not need the features of a Disabled-Accessible apartment (DA) get priority over a household in need of a DA apartment?

A: No. The DA apartments will be made available to non-Local Preference households in need of a DA apartment regardless of household size and composition *before* being made available to Local Preference households who do not need the unit features.

Q: Does Local Preference take priority over household size/composition?

A: Yes. For example, on Waiting List #2 for the 2BR Local Preference unit, if there are not enough eligible Type A Local Preference Applicants, that unit will be made available to a Type B Local Preference household before being made available to an “appropriately” sized non-Local Preference Household from Type A.

Adjustments in the Local Preference Pool

As stated by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, “If the percentage of minorities in the local preference pool is less than the percentage of minorities in the surrounding HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) defined area, the following adjustments will be made to the local preference pool. The Developer will hold a preliminary lottery comprised of all minority applicants who did not qualify for the local preference pool and rank the applicants in order of the drawing. Minority applicants should then be added to the local preference pool in order of their rankings until the percentage of minority applicants in the local preference pool is equal to the percentage of minorities in the surrounding HUD-defined area.” The Percent Minority for the Metropolitan Statistical Area of Boston-Cambridge-Quincy MSA is 27.0%. This is the minimum percentage of minority applicants that must be in the local preference pool. Minority applicants are defined as a person who is a member of the following groups: Black or African American; Asian; Native American or Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; or other (not White); and the ethnic classification Hispanic or Latino.

DISABLED-ACCESSIBLE UNIT INFORMATION

Q: Who qualifies for a disabled-accessible (DA) unit?

A: According to *Mass Access: The Accessible Housing Registry*, “units that are barrier-free are accessible to people with disabilities that are wheelchair users, but could also be used by people of different types of disabilities. For example, a person of very short stature, a person with a brain injury or stroke, severe cardiac or respiratory problems, or a person with limited standing, walking, or reaching ability, may use the design features of a wheelchair accessible unit.” Verification from a doctor or other medical professional, a peer support group, a non-medical service agency, or a reliable third party who is in a position to know about the individual’s disability may be requested. Proof of receiving Social Security Disability Insurance benefits is also sufficient.

Q: How are disabled-accessible units awarded?

A: Waiting Lists #5 and #6 will be for the DA units. The households with the top positions on these Waiting Lists will be given the first opportunity to lease the DA units.

Q: Can households that qualify for a DA unit also apply for a non-DA unit?

A: Yes. Households that qualify for a DA unit will also have positions on the Waiting Lists for non-DA units. If they reach the top position on a Waiting List for a non-DA unit before they reach the top position for a DA unit, they will have to decide if they want to lease a non-DA unit or wait until they have a top position on a Waiting List for a DA unit.

Q: What happens if there are fewer disabled-accessible qualified applicants than disabled-accessible units at the time of the Lottery?

A: If there are not enough qualified applicants on the Waiting Lists for the disabled-accessible units, the units will be made available to the highest applicants on the Waiting Lists still waiting for units of the size available.

Q: Who is entitled to request a reasonable accommodation?

A: Persons with disabilities are entitled to request a reasonable accommodation in rules, policies, practices, or services, or to request a reasonable modification in the housing, when such accommodations or modifications may be necessary to afford persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to use and enjoy the housing.